

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 JOHANN 00344 171515Z  
ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 DHA-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01  
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15  
USIA-06 /069 W  
-----171520 079479 /44

R 170821Z FEB 77  
FM AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5637  
INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN  
AMCONSUL DURBAN  
AMEMBASSY MBABANE  
AMEMBASSY GABORONE  
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L JOHANNESBURG 344

CAPE TOWN ALSO FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: SF, PINR  
SUBJ: DEATH OF DETAINEE MATTHEWS MABELANE

REF: JOHANNESBURG 344

1. IN INTERVIEWS PUBLISHED IN PRESS, PARENTS OF LATE MATTHEWS MABELANE, REVEREND PHILLIP AND MESSINA MABELANE, STATED THEIR SON DISAPPEARED LAST OCTOBER AFTER HE HAD TOLD THEM HE HAD ALREADY VISITED MOZAMBIQUE, SWAZILAND, AND BOTSWANA. AFTER NOT HEARING FROM HIM FOR SOME TIME, THEY REPORTED HIS DISAPPEARANCE TO SOWETO POLICE, WHO SAID THEY WOULD CONDUCT SEARCH. THEY FIRST HEARD FROM POLICE THERE-AFTER WHEN THEY RECEIVED REGISTERED LETTER FROM SECURITY BRANCH TWO WEEKS AGO STATING MATTHEWS WAS IN DETENTION. LETTER SAID THAT HE WAS BEING HELD UNDER SECTION SIX OF TERRORISM ACT AND THAT FAMILY COULD DELIVER CLOTHING AND FRUIT TO HIM EVERY FORTHNIGHT. HIS FATHER WENT TO JOHN VORSTER SQUARE POLICE HEADQUARTERS IN  
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JOHANNESBURG ON FEBRUARY 4 HOPING TO SEE HIS SON, BUT WAS TOLD HE WOULD HAVE TO MAKE FORMAL APPLICATION. HE HAD NOT YET MADE APPLICATION WHEN HE LEARNED OF SON'S DEATH.

2. BLACKS IN SOWETO ARE MORE THAN SKEPTICAL OF POLICE REPORTS THAT MATTHEWS MABELANE FELL TO HIS DEATH ACCIDENTALLY, JUST AS THEY DISCOUNT EARLIER REPORTS OF OTHER DETAINEES DYING IN

PRISON BY SUICIDE OR FROM NATURAL CAUSES. THEY ARE SO  
CONDITIONED BY MULTIPLE ACCOUNTS OF POLICE BRUTALITY AND  
TORTURE THAT NO OFFICIAL VERSION IS GIVEN CREDIT. CONGEN IS  
FORWARDING AIRGRAM OF FIRST-HAND ACCOUNT OF POLICE METHODS OF  
TORTURE BARELY SHORT OF HOMICIDE.  
JOHNSON

NOTE BY OC/T: REFERENCE AS RECEIVED.

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NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** DETENTION, PRESS CONFERENCES, DEATHS, POLITICAL PRISONERS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Sent Date:** 17-Feb-1977 12:00:00 am  
**Decaption Date:** 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1977JOHANN00357  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Expiration:**  
**Film Number:** D770088-1242  
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**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
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**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** 77 JOHANNESBURG 344  
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**Review Event:**  
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**Review Media Identifier:**  
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**Review Release Event:** n/a  
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**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**SAS ID:** 3298640  
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**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** DEATH OF DETAINEE MATTHEWS MABELANE  
**TAGS:** PINR, SF, (MABELANE, MATTHEWS), (MABELANE, MESSINA), (MABELANE, PHILLIP),  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**vdkgvwkey:** odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS\_Docs/f7a817c5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Review Markings:**  
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